

Some misidentified eggs of the Grey Wood-shrike

Tephrodornis gularis (Raffles) and the Long-tailed Sibia*Heterophasia picaoides* (Hodgson)

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The following misidentifications of eggs have been recorded in literature and require to be corrected. They appear to have been due to some confusion in the identification of several shrike-like birds with mainly grey and white plumage.

The egg of the Grey Wood-shrike, *Tephrodornis gularis* was first described by Hume (1889) from an oviduct egg collected by Davison, near Tavoy, Tenasserim, on 26th March 1874 (B. M. no. 1892.7.1. 1944). This is a typical *Tephrodornis* egg, broadly ovate, pale green heavily marked with blotches and specks of brown and blue-grey, measuring 21.7 x 16.9 mm. It agrees well with the eggs of other species in this genus.

In the same account Hume referred to a clutch of two eggs collected by Mandelli at Ging, near Darjeeling, on 27th April 1875 (B. M. no. 1892.7.1. 1945-6) which were very like those of a shrike. They are larger than the known *T. gularis* egg, very pale green with fine brown spots mostly concentrated near the larger end, and measure 22.9 x 18.1 and 24.6 x 18.6 mm. Both the eggs and the description of the nest agree with those of the Rufous-backed Shrike *Lanius schach* and are now considered to belong to that species.

Nine eggs taken by H. Low on the Brunei River in North Borneo (B. M. no. 1901.11.30. 279-280; 1962.1.782) were described by Sharpe (1879) and more recently by Smythies (1960) as the eggs of *T. gularis*. They are elliptical ovate and creamy-buff in colour with a heavy band of pale red-brown and purple blotches wreathing the larger end, and sparser fine markings elsewhere. They measure 24.6-25.4 mm. in length and 16.3-17.7 mm. in breadth. They have now been identified as belonging to the White-breasted Wood-swallow *Artamus leucorhynchus*.

A clutch of four eggs collected at Rungbee, near Darjeeling, by J. A. Gammie (B. M. no. 1892. 7.1. 2973-2976) were originally stated to be like those of a shrike but in the absence of comparative material were described by Hume (1889) as those of the Long-tailed Sibia *Heterophasia picaoides*. They are broadly ovate, stone-coloured with fine spots mainly wreathing the large end, and measure 23.2 x 18.4; 23.1 x 18.7 and 23.5 x 17.8 mm. They have been re-identified as eggs of *Lanius schach*. Typical eggs of *H. picaoides* taken in Sikkim and at Darjeeling by H. Stevens are pale blue with fine profuse red-brown speckling and measure 23.4-25.4 mm. in length, and 18-19 mm. in breadth.

References:

- Hume, A. O. 1889. *Nests and eggs of Indian Birds*. 2nd. Edn. Ed. E. W. Oates. Vol. 1. London.
 Sharpe, R. B. 1879. Contributions to the ornithology of Borneo, *Ibis* Ser. 4, Vol. 3: 252.
 Smythies, B. E. 1960. *Birds of Borneo*, London.

